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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,  
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USAID/ANE/MEA  
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON ISRAEL HIZBOLLAH COMBAT

Editorial Commentary

-- "King's remarks, the anger of the moderates"

Columnist Fahd Khitan writes on the inside page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (08/10): "Jordan is a friend and ally of Washington. Jordan supported Washington's policies in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan and got involved with it in the war on terrorism. U.S. President George Bush always described King Abdullah II as the voice of reason and wisdom in the region. And now here he is, the reasonable and wise leader, angry at the American policy and the Israeli actions and is directing the harshest and most severe criticisms to them. So what does Mr. Bush tell his friends now? In the recent crisis, it seems that the moderates, and Jordan among them, have had enough. They have borne too much for the sake of the paralyzed peace process in the region and have paid out of their popularity for continuing the close alliance with Washington, the west and Israel.... If the escalation in Lebanon continues in this manner, Jordan's stand is likely to develop too, because the Jordanian leadership cannot continue to defend principles that the Americans abandoned for Israel's sake. What is going on is an American declaration, unilateral one, of dismantling the alliance with the moderate Arabs and an acknowledgement of the failure of the peace process that has become in Arab people's minds a process of surrender. Jordan alone cannot go far in a dispute with Washington. It is much weaker than to be able to bear the repercussions of that. The matter requires an Egyptian Saudi move, to build in essence a new Arab front that re-draws the lines of alliance with Washington. Otherwise, the issues of the conflict will continue to escalate and then the resistance, a la Hizbollah, will become the only option for the Arab people, and there will be no room of moderation anywhere in the region."

-- "On the side of Arabism"

Chief Editor Taher Odwan writes on the back-page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (08/10): "Any war in which Israel is party facing against an Arab country or people, it becomes the national, pan-Arab and religious duty of every Arab to stand up against Israel, support whoever is fighting it and confront its aggressions and its wars. This formula is not one an impassioned literary rhetoric and a slogan from the fifties. It is a matter of identity and interests, and part of the political culture of peoples and nations in this day and age. Olmert addressed the American Jews yesterday and urged them to support Israel because it is fighting a war for survival. Although Olmert is lying, because all of Israel's

wars were not wars for survival but rather wars started against neighboring Arab countries to take new land, to expand, to establish settlements, to kill and to destroy, Israel always finds those that support it, especially in the United States. When the war against Lebanon started, the U.S. Congress supported this war instead of issuing a statement urging the parties to cease fire and abide by political and diplomatic actions. Whoever sees the congressmen on television would be amazed at this enthusiasm and passion of American politicians in justifying Israel's massacres of children and women and civilians in Lebanon, like repeating claims that Hizbollah uses civilians as human shields and so Israel is doing right.... How can all this blind support for Israel be described other than it is a racist and hostile stand against the Arabs? Just as the Lebanese leaders grabbed this moment in history with great national responsibility, placing their differences aside and standing in our trench with the resistance and against Israel, so does this war provide a moment of history for the Arabs for bridging the gap between Sunnis and Shiites and re-establishing the concepts of nationalism, the state and the nation. From their pains and their harsh times, the Lebanese are sending a message to the leaders of the sects in Iraq and other Arabs that the enemy of this nation is Israel and the foreign occupation."

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